

The Claw

The Urth list — 13 messages, 7 voices, 22 Dec 2011

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/6154>

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Larry Miller — 22 Dec 2011, 03:06

Alright so due to the discussion currently going on concerning the fantastical/magical elements in the BotNS I figured I should post this. Ive had a theory about the Claw for a long time now and Im not sure if this has ever been proposed before but I feel its relevant. Some people view the Claw as miraculous and that falls squarely in supernatural/magical territory (at least IMHO) but maybe its mysterious workings can be explained in a scientific (or science fictional) manner. Ive always thought that the Claw can do what it does through the warping of space-time around it because it is a temporal anomaly itself. We know that the Claw as a thorn was annointed for lack of a better word with Severians blood at the end of Citadel. After traveling back to the Conciliators era it becomes the Claw. When Severian obtains the relic it still has his blood on it. Now this same blood is still inside Severian as he hasnt been pricked yet. Now we know that two Severians cannot exist in the same point in time and space (ala Apu Punchau-why there was no implosion when they come into contact could just be that its not a whole other Severian just a drop of his blood) so I believe that this creates some kind of anomalous effect around Severian. This causes the Claw to warp time back to the time when Dorcas was alive resurrecting her.

Lee Berman — 22 Dec 2011, 14:21 · follows Larry Miller

Larry Miller: Ive always thought that the Claw can do what it does through the warping of space-time around it because it is a temporal anomaly itself.....Now we know that two Severians cannot exist in the same point in time and space (ala Apu Punchau-why there was no implosion when they come into contact.....so I believe that this creates some kind of anomalous effect around Severian. This causes the Claw to warp time back to the time when Dorcas was alive resurrecting her.

Dorcas does suggest the Claw works by warping time. So, maybe because Severian's life is stretched from primitive times to the far future, his energy source is sort of like a temporal rubber band always ready to snap? It would explain why Severian feels so drained after using his power.

I think the prevailing view is that his energy source is from another universe, the one higher than his own. There is an Asimov story (The Gods Themselves) from about the same time period which uses the same principle, though in that case (despite the book title) there is no spiritual aspect to the higher universe as there seems to be in BotNS. The higher universe is explained entirely in terms of physical laws- stronger nuclear force, weaker gravity, etc.

So, a leak (the White Fountain) from a higher universe to a lower one would allow an eternal, never diminishing energy source. Does that mean Urth's sun has become immortal? (I think Severian is immortal, so, perhaps).

Anyway, unlike Asimov, Wolfe ties travel to the higher universe to time travel in some sense. So perhaps your theory can be worked into the prevailing view in some manner?

Jerry Friedman — 22 Dec 2011, 19:21 · in reply to Larry Miller

From: Larry Miller decanus1284 at gmail.com

...

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I do like this. And there's no problem reconciling it with the idea that Severian gets his energy from Yesod--the temporal anomaly could make that possible.

Jerry Friedman

Jeff Wilson — 23 Dec 2011, 04:59 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 12/22/2011 1:21 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

From: Larry Miller decanus1284 at gmail.com

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Except that it only seems to work when the White Fountain is above the horizon.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com

Computational Intelligence Laboratory - Texas A&M Texarkana

< <http://www.tamut.edu/CIL> >

Brian — 23 Dec 2011, 14:22 · follows Jeff Wilson

Isn't there some sighting of the white fountain during the Apu-Punchau scene? If Severian's blood in both his body and the claw creates a temporal anomaly that allows his powers, then perhaps the massive anomaly created when he and Apu-Punchau touch is somehow part of the whole...uh..."white fountain process".

Lee Berman — 23 Dec 2011, 14:46 · follows Brian

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Well, Severian does see the White Fountain as he breaks out of Apu Punchau's tomb. Previous to that, Barbatus twice suggests to Severian that he will have access to the White Fountain power only when its light first reaches Urth. I assume that to mean the whole Urth, else his power would only work during a certain time of day. The White Fountain/Claw's power is never fully reliable but I don't get the sense the problem is related to Urth's turning.

Jane Delawney — 31 Dec 2011, 01:35 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 23/12/11 14:46, Lee Berman wrote:

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Personally I've never been convinced by the 'powers only available after the White Fountain light reaches Urth / is above the horizon' theory (even though this is clearly posited in the text and appears for sure to be what [Wolfe tells us that] Severian believes) just because Sev / Apu Punchau performs miracles of healing (and resurrection? I forget. I don't have UOTNS in front of me now) from the time he arrives in the primitive village; it's part of why the villagers come to follow him in the first place.

Admitted that the most up-front 'miracle' of all, the failure of the sunrise, is caused by the Yesodis not by Severian; but Sev does elsewhere state explicitly that he performed healings and other works early in his stay in that era, and indeed I seem to remember he is actually puzzled by his ability to do this in the pre-White-Fountain era!

Perhaps the 'miraculous' powers are more part of Severian himself than even Severian realises.

jd

Jeff Wilson — 01 Jan 2012, 13:54 · in reply to Jane Delawney

On 12/30/2011 7:35 PM, Jane Delawney wrote:

On 23/12/11 14:46, Lee Berman wrote:

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Brian: Isn't there some sighting of the white fountain during the Apu-Punchau scene? If Severian's blood in both his body and the claw creates a temporal anomaly that allows his powers, then perhaps the massive anomaly created when he and Apu-Punchau touch is somehow part of the whole...uh..."white fountain process".

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CH L "Darkness in the House of Day" is when he writes:

"The injured and the ill were brought to me for healing; some I cured as I had cured Declan, or as we of the guild had been taught to prolong the lives of our clients. Others died in my arms. Perhaps I could have revived the dead as well, as I had recalled poor Zama; I never attempted to do so."

...but in CH XXIX "Among the Villagers", Declan's healing is described:

"After a moment I realized it was no longer quite so dark as it had been. A faint light played across him, moving with the movements of my eyes. My first thought was that it came from the thorn I kept in the little leather sack Dorcas had sewn for the Claw, though it seemed impossible that it could shine through the leather and my shirt in such a way. I took it out. It was as dark as it had been when I had tried to light the corridor outside my cabin with it, and I put it away again. "

"I pulled down the homespuns that had covered him and found he was naked beneath them. His right side was swollen, the lump the size of a child's head. I smoothed it away, thrilling to the power that surged out of Urth, through my legs and out my fingers."

So he's drawing on the power in the ground when he does this sort of healing, and his own eyes light up instead of the Claw.

Perhaps the 'miraculous' powers are more part of Severian himself than even Severian realises.

It seems he has the gift to draw from different sources of energy to do his healing, at least. But if the Claw-White Fountain connection transcends time, it ought to work at any time of the day. If it can be blocked by the limb of Urth, why does it work in the mines on the ape?

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Gerry Quinn — 01 Jan 2012, 16:55 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: Jeff Wilson

Sent: Sunday, January 01, 2012 1:54 PM

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Do we really know he is drawing on a power from Urth? That is how he interprets it, but on what evidence? He doesn't really feel the source, or he would not first have checked the Claw. That said, he drained the batteries of the Ship at one point, so clearly he could draw power from there. But the power he has is connected with an ability to reverse the flow of time. This is plausible for a white hole, and perhaps also for a Yesodi ship.

I would speculate that he draws only on such sources, and the White Fountain is not truly blocked by Urth. But perhaps there are other sources. The Cumaeon, for example, draws on the power of an ancient creature on the planet of a distant star to accomplish her own temporal delvings.

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 01 Jan 2012, 17:44 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 1/1/2012 10:55 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson@clueland.com>

Sent: Sunday, January 01, 2012 1:54 PM

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> beneath them. His right side was swollen, the lump the size of a child's
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Do we really know he is drawing on a power from Urth? That is how he
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or he would not first have checked the Claw.

In the quote you just snipped, Sev says he checks the Claw to see if it is glowing. It is several moments and paragraphs later (also snipped) that he does the healing and feels the thrilling mojo.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at clueland.com
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Gerry Quinn — 01 Jan 2012, 18:09 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

From: Jeff Wilson

On 1/1/2012 10:55 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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interprets it, but on what evidence? He doesn't really feel the source,
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In the quote you just snipped, Sev says he checks the Claw to see if it
is glowing. It is several moments and paragraphs later (also snipped)
that he does the healing and feels the thrilling mojo.

So you're saying that the Claw might have started to glow afterwards? But he does indicate that
there was already a glow apparently emanating from his eyes.

Does it matter anyway? I think it's clear that the Claw at most held a residual trace of
Severian's power.

- Gerry Quinn

Jeff Wilson — 01 Jan 2012, 18:38 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On 1/1/2012 12:09 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

From: Jeff Wilson <jwilson@clueland.com>

On 1/1/2012 10:55 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

>

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> is glowing. It is several moments and paragraphs later (also snipped)
> that he does the healing and feels the thrilling mojo.

So you're saying that the Claw might have started to glow afterwards?

No.

But he does indicate that there was already a glow apparently emanating
from his eyes.

Yes, though this is apparently the first occasion.

The sequence is:

* Sev barricades the door and windows of the sickroom, which becomes dark.

- * Sev notices the room is too dark for him to see the sick man.
- * Sev notices the room lightens.
- * Sev notices the light moves with his eyes.
- * Sev checks to see if the Claw is somehow casting the light, but it is still in its bag in his shirt and when he peeks at it, it is not lit at all.
- * Sev chats with the sick man.
- * Sev smooths out the lump as he feels the power flow up through him.
- * Later, the recovered man confirms he was visited in the sickroom by a figure with glowing eyes.

Sev's later healing and restoration of Zama to life is similarly accompanied by eye-glowing and visceral sensations.

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Lee Berman — 02 Jan 2012, 18:41 · follows Jeff Wilson

Gerry Quinn: That said, he drained the batteries of the Ship at one point, so clearly he could draw power from there....

Yep, I think this supports Jane's contention that Severian's power resides mostly within himself.

But the power he has is connected with an ability to reverse the flow of time. This is plausible for a white hole.

So perhaps he can draw from various celestial bodies (Tzadkiel's ship being a small version of one) and perhaps his powers vary based on what body he is drawing from?

The Cumaean, for example, draws on the power of an ancient creature on the planet of a distant star to accomplish her own temporal delvings.

I have my doubt about this (though the being on Fomalhaut might really provide a temporal touchstone). I think the Stone Town meeting was a set-up and that the Cumaean is really drawing from Severian's nascent power, as planned. Her plan is to contact Apu Punchau, of all people in history....and Severian is right there. Coincidence? hm....

She doesn't seem to be quite in control of the situation and I don't think she's had many opportunities to do it before. Hildegren says Apu Punchau is someone who can "make a difference". It's to be the crowning achievement of Hildegren's career of resurrecting the dead. Merryrn offers a vague explanation of him which kind of suggests he is The Conciliator. Are we to

think it is all a coincidence that Severian happens to stumble into a seance which is meant to contact Apu Punchau and The Conciliator?